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with the clusters in the Milky Way also indicate a large distance. From a photograph with the twin 6-inch telescope in Upsala it was found that the spiral appeared as a real nebulous object. As the stars then on the plate could be distinguished easily from the stars belonging to the nebula, star counts on this and other plates were made. It was found that the stars down to $15^m.7$ did not show any dependence upon the spiral nebula. It was then concluded that the spiral is more distant than stars of this magnitude, which means that the distance will be of the order of 10,000 light years or larger.

A more detailed account of the spectrographic and photographic results will be given later in connection with further observational work on this object.

KNUT LUNDMARK.

Mt. Hamilton, November 20, 1921.

GENERAL NOTES

The Drake University Municipal Observatory.—The formal dedication of the Drake University Municipal Observatory, at Des Moines, Iowa, on Saturday, November 5, 1921, was an event of more than local importance. In the first place it marks the realization of a dream. Twenty years ago, Professor D. W. Morehouse, of Drake University, "walked over the Waveland park grounds and said to himself that the sightly knoll in the middle of that beautiful public park was the place for an astronomical observatory. . . . But between noting the availability of the site and actually getting a building of stone and concrete with all the modern equipment there was a lapse of twenty years, of more or less continuous effort, most of them years of no hope and great discouragement¹."

In the second place, the observatory, representing an investment of \$53,000, was built thru the combined efforts of Drake University and the city of Des Moines. This spirit of cooperation is worthy of all honor, and particularly the honor of imitation by other cities and colleges. So far, we believe, the institution is unique. The school department of the city of Oakland, California, owns the fine Chabot Observatory, and uses it, under the directorship of Mr. Charles Burckhalter, in the education of grammar and high school

¹*Des Moines Evening Tribune.*

students of the city; but the general public is admitted only under special conditions. Many research observatories in the country, the Lick, Mt. Wilson, Yerkes and Allegheny, to name but four—put one or more telescopes at the disposal of the public on certain nights, and admit visitors more or less freely during daylight hours. But the Drake University Municipal Observatory is, we believe, the only one built and owned jointly by a city and an independent university and dedicated at once to the work of research, student instruction and the enlightenment and entertainment of the general public.

The equipment, provided by Drake University, includes an 8½-inch equatorial telescope, transit instruments, clocks, chronometers and portable instruments. Professor Morehouse is the director. The dedicatory address was delivered by Dr. Forest Ray Moulton, of the University of Chicago, his subject being "Larger Worlds."

Dr. Harlow Shapley, formerly astronomer in the Mount Wilson Observatory, and member of our Publication Committee, has been appointed director of the Harvard College Observatory; and Professor S. I. Bailey, who has been Acting Director since the death of Professor E. C. Pickering early in 1919, has again resumed charge of the Arequipa branch of the Observatory, an office he had held from 1892 to 1919. In calling so young a man (Dr. Shapley is just 36) to the directorship, Harvard University is following the precedent established by President Eliot when, in 1876, he called the late Professor Pickering, then in his 30th year, to the same position. His friends and colleagues can offer Dr. Shapley no better wish than that he may have as long and distinguished a career as that of his great predecessor.

Lille Observatory—The *October Observatory* states that Mr. Robert Jonckheere, the Director of the Lille Observatory, has reconstructed the 14-inch equatorial and dome which had been damaged to such extent during the German occupation as to be unusable. The mounting of the telescope had been wrecked, the circles defaced, and the dome made immovable. Mr. Jonckheere has now installed an excellent electrical equipment for moving dome, shutter and telescope, and has added a wireless receiving set

and various self-recording meteorological instruments. All this despite the fact that no war indemnity has as yet been granted. It is with the greatest pleasure that we record these facts, and the further statement that Mr. Jonckheere, who has distinguished himself as a discoverer and observer of double stars, hopes to resume observing at once.

New Zealand Astronomical Society.—From Dr. C. E. Adams, Director of the Hector Observatory, at Wellington, New Zealand, comes the welcome news of the formation of the New Zealand Astronomical Society. The Astronomical Society of the Pacific tenders the new Society most cordial greetings and good wishes.

Encke's Comet.—Mr. Frank E. Seagrave sends an ephemeris for Encke's Comet for the period April 15 to August 30, 1922, based upon the latest orbit computed by him. He states that the comet will be most unfavorably placed for observation during the first three months of the coming year; hence it is improbable that it will be detected before April 15, when it will be 3 hours west of the Sun and 21° south of it—a position still sufficiently unfavorable for northern observers. The comet makes its nearest approach to the Earth at this return early in August. The computed positions to the end of May, 1922, are as follows:

GR. MEAN TIME	R. A.	DECL.
1922 April 15.0	22 ^h 32 ^m 58 ^s	−11°42'14"
23.0	22 38 57	−11 4 22
May 1.0	22 44 5	−10 30 24
9.0	22 48 47	−10 0 58
17.0	22 52 29	−9 36 24
25.0	22 55 17	−9 17 21
June 2.0	22 57 5	−9 4 19

New Director for the Washburn Observatory.—*Science* for November 11, 1921, records the appointment of Dr. Joel Stebbins as Director of the Washburn Observatory and Professor of Astronomy at the University of Wisconsin, to date from July 1, 1922, when Professor George C. Comstock, who has held the position since 1889, reaches the age of retirement. Dr. Stebbins, a former Fellow in Astronomy at the Lick Observatory, has been Director of the Observatory of the University of Illinois since 1913.

The Twenty-sixth Meeting of the American Astronomical Society.—*Popular Astronomy* for October contains a full account of the very successful meeting of the American Astronomical Society held from August 30 to September 1, 1921, at Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., on the invitation of Professor Frederick Slocum, Director of the Van Vleck Observatory. Abstracts of fifteen of the papers presented at this meeting are printed in the November number of *Popular Astronomy*, and the others will appear in later issues. These abstracts, as a rule, go sufficiently into detail to give a good idea of the data or theory brought forward by the writers and all of them will be found of interest.

The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada will meet in Toronto (December 27 to 31) with the American Association for the Advancement of Science and will join in the program of Section D of the Association.